

Parking Lot by EmeraldTulip

Category: Stranger Things (TV 2016)

Genre: A lot of introspection, Aged-Up Character(s), Boys In Love, Established Relationship, Future Fic, M/M, Marriage Proposal (ish), Period-Typical Homophobia, Plans For The Future, Set in the 90s, byler, minor instances of strong language (show-appropriate)

Language: English

Characters: Dustin Henderson, Eleven, Lucas Sinclair, Mike Wheeler, Will Byers

Relationships: Will Byers & Dustin Henderson & Lucas Sinclair & Mike Wheeler & Eleven, Will Byers/Mike Wheeler

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Summary:

Spoiler alert: It's in the parking lot of a gas station in the middle of hot and sticky nowhere that Will agrees to marry him, and Mike tests out how easily the word 'fiancé' slips off his tongue. And it's not planned, exactly, and they both know it can't work out, but it's—

““God, Mike Wheeler,” Will says stumblingly, eyes bright. “Do you know how much—I...” He doesn't need to finish his sentence, because Mike already knows.’

Parking Lot

Author's Note:

hello stranger things fandom, im logan and i have arrived with my first fic for you guys! (also i promise i use proper punctuation and capitalization and such its just easier for me to differentiate the a/n and story if i write it like this sorry for the bother.) anyway, im byler and mileven trash, but i had a good idea for byler, so... here it is! it takes place ten or so years after season 1, so all the kids are in their early twenties. byler is established, at least since they were teenagers (i dont have a specific age so feel free to interpret). also eleven is alive and joyce adopted her, because i say so.
enjoy!

They're somewhere in California, for sure, but Eleven got them turned around hours ago. Not that it's her fault, exactly—maps are confusing—but it *was* her giving them bad directions, and she *did* refuse to listen to Will trying to correct her (which annoyed the hell out of him—even if they were only siblings by adoption, they acted like they'd grown up together). She did manage to find a gas station with a convenience store, fortunately, but it was still her who got them lost. (Now it's her trying to convince Lucas to blow the rest of their money on Eggos. God, they all sometimes still act like they're fifteen.)

As he stands by a rack of chips and waits, Mike can't help but wonder about whether they'll make it back in time for school—driving from Hawkins to San Francisco is taking longer than any of them expected. He can't help but wonder if Holly passed her latest math test, the one she kept babbling on about. He can't help but wonder if the people back at home will ever stop avoiding all their families (it's not their fault he and his friends attracted so much attention, even if it was ten years ago). He can't help but wonder how his mother and Joyce are doing, since they had a falling out ages ago that hasn't quite healed yet—and he can't help but wonder if that's his fault. (And Will's, he

supposes, but he never could bring himself to blame Will. Besides, he and Will are a package deal, so Mike is more than willing to shift any blame off of Will onto himself.)

“Mike,” Will murmurs, seemingly reading his mind, touching his hand and pulling him out of his thoughts. Instinctively, Mike glances at the cashier, but she seems too preoccupied by El and Lucas arguing to look over at them.

“Yeah,” he says, voice slightly rusty from lack of use. He coughs, says it again. “Yeah.”

“C’mon,” Will says, tugging him toward the door. The cashier still doesn’t look over. “Let’s go out.”

Mike follows him blindly, implicitly trusting, already sinking back into his thoughts. He’s been given a lot to think about in the last year or so—maybe even more than when he was twelve, which seemed impossible until recently.

“Dustin,” Will addresses the other boy, “wait for us in the car when you’re done, we’re gonna go for a walk.”

Dustin nods, but Mike doesn’t really register that. Will pulls him along, opening the door to the store, and Mike vaguely notices the blast of hot air that hits them as they leave.

There’s another tug on his hand, and Mike realizes that Will has led him to the back side of the store, sitting on the curb in the shade—it’s too hot to be standing in the sun. He sinks down to join him, staring half-absentmindedly at the license plate on the car in front of them (not theirs, probably the cashier’s). It takes him a minute to realize that Will is looking at him.

“What?” he asks, voice clear this time.

Will doesn’t say anything for another moment before asking, “Are you okay?”

“Yes,” Mike says automatically. Then, hesitating for a moment, he corrects himself. “Maybe. I will be.” It’s the truth.

“Okay.”

That’s possibly what Mike loves most about Will, he thinks as Will tips his head back and leans against the wall. He doesn’t ask what’s wrong, he doesn’t push, because he knows when Mike needs it and when he doesn’t.

“You’re thinking too hard,” Will says after a moment.

“I know.”

Will doesn’t lift his head. “What are you thinking about?”

“You,” Mike replies honestly. There’s no need to lie about it anymore; there hasn’t been a reason to for several years.

“Oh?” His voice is prompting, but still gentle. Will has always been gentle, even before he was kidnapped when they were twelve. Sure, he hasn’t liked to yell very much since then, but not much else has changed.

Mike loves him for that, too.

“Stuff,” he says vaguely. It’s still hard to talk about.

Will sighs, finally raising his head. “Mike,” he says.

“What?”

His eyes are genuinely caring. “I can’t help you if you don’t talk to me.”

“Yeah,” Mike mumbles. “I just... our moms, you know.”

“Oh,” Will says again, his voice adopting a slightly cold edge. “Yeah.”

“I... I’m sorry.”

“For what, for your mom?” Will laughs without humor. “Mike, it’s not your fault. If anything, it’s mine.”

“Will—”

“No,” Will cuts him off. “I’m serious. I knew your mom wouldn’t like it. You could have stayed with El, with a girl, and your parents would be okay with that, and none of this would’ve happened!”

He doesn’t have to specify the “this”, because Mike already knows. He remembers the shouting, the tears, the arguing, as if it happened yesterday and not five years ago. He remembers Holly crying, Nancy, visiting from school, screaming at their parents, him just standing there in shock as his dad threw a fit and his mom simply vanished from the room. He remembers running from the house, grabbing his bike as Nancy tried to stop him. He remembers collapsing into Will’s arms the second he dropped his bike on the Byers’ front porch, his boyfriend understanding immediately, El and Joyce trying to comfort him.

“It’s not your fault,” Mike insists now. “I don’t want to be with El, and she doesn’t want to be with me. Maybe ages ago we might have, but we talked about this, we came to an understanding years ago. It’s *you*, Will. It’s only ever been you. Besides,” he says bitterly, “it’s just as much my fault. I should’ve known better than to tell them, I shouldn’t have told them it was you, I should’ve stopped my mom from calling yours and shouting... I could’ve done something.”

“Mike...” Will trails off for a moment, placing his hand on Mike’s knee. The touch scorches him through his jeans, and he reflexively looks around. But there’s no one around who would care. There’s no one around at all.

So Will doesn’t move his hand, instead ducking his head to catch Mike’s gaze. “Mike. Let’s stop talking about it.”

Mike doesn’t argue, doesn’t even consider it. “Okay.” He’s only quiet for a moment before saying something else. “Will, can we agree it was my parents’ fault, and fuck what they think?”

Will looks at him, grinning. “Yeah. We can do that.”

“We should only care about what the important people think,” Mike continues. “Like El, and Lucas and Dustin, and Jonathan, Nancy, your mother...” He leaves off ‘your father’, for obvious reasons, but the absence of the words still rings clear.

“Steve?” Will suggests, teasing, distracting them from who they’re both thinking of.

Mike laughs. “Well, sure, since he was fine with it. Us.”

“Us,” Will repeats.

Someone—sounds like Dustin—shouts, “You forgot the *fucking* Gushers!”

“But I got the Eggos!” Yeah, that’s definitely El.

“Can we just go now? Please?” Lucas yells, sounding exasperated. “Mike! Will! *Let’s go!*”

Mike and Will, they’ve talked about it. How hard it is. Because it *is* hard. It’s part of the reason they decided on schools so far from Indiana. Not just because the schools there are good, but because the people from their hometown, they wouldn’t understand. Because it’s hard for them to hide how much they mean to each other, and where they’ve ended up, they don’t have to.

Yet, despite everything, all the freedom they’ve tried so hard to procure, Mike only really feels safe admitting it in his head.

It’s a shame.

Sometimes he wishes that things were different, and he voices this to Will now.

“I know,” Will replies.

And Mike sometimes wishes he could hold Will’s hand in the street without the constant looming threat of being beaten, shunned, or even killed; wishes he could dance with him when they and their friends go out instead of casting glances at each other from across the room as Will dances with El instead to throw people off and Mike hangs back; wishes they could be *official*. They don’t have to be official to be real—they both know this, and they agree that, in most aspects, marriage is only a piece of paper—but sometimes Mike can’t help but wish. Wishes he could call him boyfriend, fiancé, *husband*. He wants to, with all his being.

So, with his heart in his throat, he tells Will.

“Are you proposing to me?” Will questions, voice light and teasing—there’s an undercurrent of something else, though, something that prompts Mike to grin sheepishly and nod. No special location, no big speech, no ring—just Mike, his thoughts, and Will—but it’s enough. Will’s eyebrows lift, and he asks, “Right here? In a gas station parking lot, in the middle of nowhere, rushed by our impatient friends?”

Mike shrugs and nods again. “I love you,” he offers as Will laughs.

“God, Mike Wheeler,” he says stumblingly, eyes bright. “Do you know how much—I...” He doesn’t need to finish his sentence, because Mike already knows.

There isn’t a single moment he can remember when he wasn’t in love with Will. Or, rather, he knows he hasn’t always loved Will like this—there have been others, of course—but now, every memory he has reminds him that yes, Will Byers is *his*, and he is Will’s. Mike has loved him through school, through the kidnapping, through finding out he was alive, through thinking he was dead, through finding Eleven, through the nightmares, through telling their friends, through telling their parents, through misery and pain and relief and joy.

He’s loved this boy since forever.

He does already know what Will wants to say. He already wants to say it again himself.

No, more. He wants to kiss this boy. He wants to *marry* him.

(And yes, he knows they can’t. Not yet. He knows.

He doesn’t care.)

“Yes. God, Mike,” Will says again, hands coming up to frame Mike’s face. “Yes. You know.”

Mike agrees. “I know.”

Author's Note:

apparently gushers were a popular junk food in the nineties, so... slight authenticity!

tbh i have no idea how karen and ted would react if they found out their son had a boyfriend but for dramas sake i made it like... well, you know. joyce has to be fine with it though, it only makes sense.

i have to say though, those children deserve so much better than what they get, imo.

i have a feeling that this is vaguely based off of a scene from some book or something, but i cant remember so if you know something thats like this please tell me because its bothering me that i cant remember it.

anyway, i hope you enjoyed! comments and kudos are, as always, appreciated.

find me on tumblr, my main is [@fivehargreeves](#) and my writing blog is [@lowriting](#)!